
Education Committee

ESSB 5890

Brief Description: Providing flexibility in the education system.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McDermott, McAuliffe, Oemig and Hobbs).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Repeals, modifies, or suspends for two years certain laws related to policies, commemorative programs, and activities required from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and school districts.

Hearing Date: 3/20/09

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383)

Background:

Title 28A of the Revised Code of Washington contains most of the laws pertaining to Washington's public school system. School districts are political subdivisions of the state whose structure, duties, and responsibilities are established by state law, with functions to be carried out under the direction of elected boards of directors. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is assigned by the state Constitution to have supervision over all matters pertaining to the common schools, but most of the duties of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) are established in law.

There are a number of laws requiring the OSPI to establish commemorative programs. Other laws require school districts to meet program standards or adopt model policies established by the OSPI.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A number of laws related to policies, commemorative programs, and other activities required from the OSPI and school districts are repealed, modified, or suspended for two years.

The following programs or requirements are repealed:

- public schools must observe Temperance and Good Citizenship Day, and annually the OSPI must produce a related program for teachers;
- the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Washington State Bar Association must develop a volunteer-based conflict resolution and mediation program; and
- if schools operate gardens or farms for educational purposes, students must be given the opportunity to be involved and must learn about both organic and conventional growing methods.

The following programs or requirements are suspended until July 1, 2011:

- schools are encouraged to offer financial literacy education;
- the Washington Civil Liberties Public Education Program is established to educate the public and develop presentation and curriculum materials;
- the SPI must allocate grants under the Washington Civil Liberties Public Education Program, a requirement that is suspended except if private funds are available.

The following laws are amended:

- school districts that offer Highly Capable Programs must follow OSPI rules regarding identification of students and provision of a program based on the students' unique needs only to the extent funds are available;
- school districts are encouraged, rather than required, to meet minimum state and federal standards for a preschool program if a school district has one;
- school districts must submit reports on traffic safety education programs every other year. Districts with programs and with a private high school within the boundary must offer at least one traffic safety education class outside regular school hours only to the extent funds are available. By January 1, 2010, OSPI must survey districts regarding the impact of traffic safety education rules and minimum hours of training and must make revisions to reduce the burden on districts;
- school districts are required to conduct activities in observance of Veteran's Day, but are not required to have at least 60 minutes of planned activity;
- school districts must have a policy to provide notice of threats of violence or harm to students or staff who are the subject of the threat, but specific procedures for disclosing information about a student's conduct are removed. A requirement for OSPI to adopt a model policy by January 1, 2003 is removed; and
- The Financial Literacy Public Private Partnership must identify strategies to increase financial literacy by July 1, 2011, rather than June 30, 2009, and must issue a final report by 2013 rather than 2009.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available for substitute bill.

Effective Date: Sections 1 through 10 of the bill, containing all substantive provisions, contain an emergency clause and take effect immediately. The remainder of the bill (an expiration clause) takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.